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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, who makes the crooked places straight, continue to guide our lawmakers as they seek to walk with wisdom and integrity. May they embrace Your wisdom, which is pure, gentle, considerate, merciful, productive, peaceful, and sincere.

Lord, lead them on a path of integrity that strives to keep a clear conscience before You and humanity. Inspired by Your unconditional love, empower our Senators to achieve a faithfulness that will cause people to glorify Your Name. Provide our legislators with the courage to turn from evil as You do for them more than they can ask or imagine.

We pray in Your righteous Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, after today, there will be no doubt which party is working to solve the problems in our country and which party is accelerating us toward an unnecessary, avoidable disaster.

Let me say that again without interruption.

Madam President, after today, there will be no doubt—no doubt—about which party in this Chamber is working to solve the problems that face our country and which party is accelerating us toward unnecessary, avoidable disaster.

At the end of last week, I filed cloture on proceeding to the continuing resolution sent to us by the House of Representatives, which, among other things, would prevent a government shutdown and suspend the debt limit so we can pay for our debts incurred during the previous administration.

In a few hours, we will vote on cloture on a motion to proceed to this bill. The Democrats will do the responsible thing, the right thing, and the thing that has been done for decades by both parties and vote yes.

Now, if Republicans follow through with their plans to vote no, they will be on record deliberately sabotaging our country's ability to pay the bills and likely causing the first ever default in American history. The consequences of a default would be, in the words of Secretary Yellen, "catastrophic."

The best case scenario is—the best case under this awful situation is—that our country would fall into another recession, potentially erasing all the progress we have made to pull ourselves out of the COVID crisis. That is if we are lucky. Otherwise, one anal-

ysis warned that default could hurt Americans for generations—for generations. Interest costs would be higher and not go down very quickly, and that has huge effects on so many different people, and that is only one of the effects of default.

So I want my Republican colleagues to think carefully about the practical consequences of what they are doing. A default means, quite simply, the government cannot pay its bills. It means that suddenly the government is presented with unimaginable options. Do they tell seniors they won't get their Social Security checks, or veterans that they won't see their benefits, or tell our military that they won't be getting paid?

And the consequences on Main Street would be equally severe. A default would very likely send markets crashing and interest rates skyrocketing, making it harder for small businesses to make ends meet, for homeowners and renters to pay the bills, and for consumers to keep our economy going.

All of the consequences—or so many of the consequences—can be boiled down into three frightening numbers: 6 million, 9, \$15 trillion—6 million jobs lost, 9 percent unemployment, \$15 trillion in squandered household wealth. Let me say that again. Those are devastating numbers on so many households throughout America, just about every household. That is 6 million jobs lost, 9 percent unemployment, \$15 trillion in squandered household wealth.

Yes, that is what we are potentially looking at if Republicans get their irresponsible and reckless way. None of this needs to happen—none of it. The only reason we are here and the only reason this is even a possibility is because Republicans are making this a possibility by preventing the government from paying its bills. It is an unhinged position to take, one that not long ago only the most radical elements of the Republican Party would have embraced.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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There is no scenario on God's green Earth where it should be worth risking millions of jobs, trillions in household wealth, people's Social Security checks, veterans' benefits, and another recession, just to score a short-term, meaningless political point. That is what Republicans seem fixated on doing.

Now, there is a very simple step we can take today to guarantee the government won't default and won't shut down. Both sides can come together to vote yes on today's vote and vote to pass the continuing resolution. Just as Democrats worked in a bipartisan fashion under the Trump administration, Republicans must now step up to the plate. To do otherwise is the height of recklessness and irresponsibility.

Republicans say they don't want to see a government shutdown. They say they don't want to see our government default on our debt. Then, they should vote yes. It is plain and simple. It is very clear. There is no obfuscation here—crystal clear. Voting yes means avoiding default and avoiding a government shutdown. Voting no says: Let's risk it. Let's risk it.

By choosing to block today's resolution, Republicans are intentionally making default more likely. By blocking an extension of the debt limit, Republicans will solidify themselves for a long time as the party of default.

I cannot emphasize that this isn't just another political game. We are facing a parade of horrors that will hurt every single American in this country. And it is important to remember that today's vote will also advance a number of priorities besides just funding the government and avoiding default, as important as those are. It would provide desperately needed emergency funding for millions of people affected by natural disasters from this summer, including hurricanes, wildfires, and flooding across Tennessee, Kentucky, and Virginia. It will provide billions to help resettle Afghan refugees who risked their lives helping our troops abroad. Both sides claim they support these priorities. So the easy answer is to vote yes later today.

Being elected to office means sometimes you have to do things to rise above partisan politics. It means we have an obligation to work together when our country faces an acute crisis. Tearing the barn down is easy. Building it up, preserving it, and keeping it standing year after year takes hard work and cooperation. And, at the end of the day, the only thing that matters in this Chamber is how its Members vote.

Rest assured, Democrats will vote today to do the right thing. The American people will be watching whether or not our Republican colleagues choose to vote in favor of preserving our full faith and credit or vote in favor of an unprecedented default.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

EXTENDING GOVERNMENT FUNDING AND DELIVERING EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 5305, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 137, H.R. 5305, a bill making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, and for providing emergency assistance, and for other purposes.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

VACCINATIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I am glad to share that, a few minutes ago, I received a booster vaccination for COVID-19. All throughout the pandemic, I have followed the best advice from experts and especially from my own healthcare providers. It was an easy decision to receive a booster.

I am a survivor of childhood polio from before vaccines—before vaccines eradicated that disease here in our country and around the world now. So I have been a lifelong champion of vaccinations.

Mountains of evidence tell us these shots are safe, effective, and dramatically shrink the odds of severe disease or death from COVID. Like I have been saying for months, these safe and effective vaccines are the way to defend ourselves and our families from this terrible virus. They are also how we stay on offense against COVID as a country. All Americans should speak with their doctors and get vaccinated.

ECONOMY

Madam President, now, on a completely different matter, it is not unusual for a President to have a rough spell. Every administration faces a stretch of time where nothing seems to go their way. But what we are witnessing today is entirely different.

President Biden has not been dealt a bad hand by forces outside his control. This White House is not sailing through some unavoidable patch of choppy water. No, the Democrats have steered our country straight into a storm of serious crises all of their own making.

On issue after issue, Americans are hurting because of specific policy

choices that Democrats have made over the objections of people who actually knew better. Democrats did not inherit most of the painful inflation that is hammering working families. Their decisions have fueled it. Even liberal economists warned the President that runaway liberal spending could send costs soaring—soaring—for the middle class. Now working Americans are paying dearly at the grocery store, at the gas station, and practically everywhere that matters to families.

And what are Democrats doing today? Putting together yet another reckless taxing-and-spending spree behind closed doors that would make inflation even worse.

Now, President Biden did not inherit humiliation in Afghanistan either; he deliberately chose that as well. The Biden administration's own experts warned the White House that a reckless withdrawal would embolden terrorists and harm our ability to gather intelligence that keeps us safe. But the President clung to his made-up deadline, handed huge momentum to the Taliban and their terrorist friends, and broke his explicit promise to leave no American behind who wanted out. As one former Democratic Member of Congress said last week, "The way the administration executed that withdrawal last week has been an utter and abject disaster."

Democrats did not inherit this border crisis either. This security nightmare and human tragedy is yet another direct result of their own policies. President Biden and his allies spent 2 years campaigning on the concept of Big Government giveaways to people here illegally. Then they took office and began dismantling enforcement on the border. So what do they expect? Wave after wave of vulnerable people have been lured into hellish conditions by the mirage the Democrats have set up—cruelty masquerading as compassion. Untold thousands of people have simply been released into our country with what amounts to a polite invitation to show up—show up—for a hearing. Even before the Biden surge, only about half of individuals actually showed up.

One self-created crisis after another from our unified Democratic Party government. The latest additions are their confusion about how to fund the government and raise the debt ceiling. For more than 2 months now, Senate Republicans have been completely clear about how this process will play out, so let me make it abundantly clear one more time.

We will support a clean continuing resolution that will prevent a government shutdown, get disaster relief to Louisiana, help properly vetted Afghan refugees who put themselves on the line for America, and support the Iron Dome assistance for our ally Israel. We will not provide Republican votes for raising the debt limit.